# MONTEREY NEWS

February 2004
VOLUME XXXIV · Number 2


## The Town

Democracy in action is a wondrous thing, and when practiced at the local level it is easily observed as keeping the heart of the community—a heart that's interested in the quality of life—pumping. Among the highly oxygenated cells currently making the circuit: committees of officials and citizenry have gotten involved in discussions of regulations pertaining to implementing the Scenic Mountains Act as it applies to Monterey. Dollar signs are starting to take up an increasing amount of space and time as first steps are taken toward putting together the town budget, the school budget, and finding out about the commonwealth's contribution (or lack thereof) to supporting either. People are scurrying to find new injections of funds through grants and other sources in an attempt to avoid both unreasonable tax hikes and red ink. Last year's projects are nearing completion and next year's are being planned, modified, and put into shape for proposal at town meeting. Among the proposals are some that will change the way we have been doing things, and voters will decide if they think that's progress—or not.

Michael Storch

*The chefs and servers at the Coffee Club New Year's Breakfast: Fran Amidon, Steve and Sally Pullen, Liz Goodman*

### The Fire Company

Fire Chief Ray Tryon approached the Select Board to propose that the current system of granting tax abatements to members of the volunteer fire department as recompense for the time they spend protecting the town's property and people be changed to a direct compensation system. The department is composed of what Tryon calls "unpaid professionals" who have gone through over 160 hours of firefighter and medical training to meet state standards and continue to work on improving their skills and acquiring new ones, meeting nearly every week. By June, all firefighters will have completed the training at the level of Firefighter II, and then the department will take up hazardous materials training. All members of the department are trained as First Responders, and two have EMT. certification, which requires ongoing training to keep current. This dedication and commitment of personal time has a price, however, and it is sometimes hard to see the connection between a once-a-year tax abatement and the commitment to weekly training sessions of several hours each and constant availability to go out on calls.

The new system would pay firefighters for work performed: no show, no pay—and that would apply to showing up for training as well as going out on calls. Additionally, the proposed compensation system would correct the abatement system's inequities. For example, two firefighters who live in the same house get one abatement, and the new approach would solve that. Chief Tryon

also noted that a fire department member gets the abatement even if he or she wasn't able or chose not to go to an occasional meeting—another problem with the current system that would be addressed.

In general, eight or nine local firefighters are available to show up to respond to calls. The Monterey department responded to 68 calls in 2001, 69 calls in 2002, and 42 calls through October 18 of 2003. Many of the calls are medical emergencies, some are fires or hazardous materials, and unfortunately some are false alarms. Last year, one call was for a severe weather/natural disaster. The entire department undergoes about 100 hours of training each year.

The pay would be reportable as income with withholding deducted, according to Tryon, as the firefighters would be classified as employees of the town. In addition, a schedule for retired firefighters who have reached the age of 60 with at least 20 years of service is also proposed. A sliding scale of payments that depends on rank in the department (which currently has one Chief, one Deputy Chief, one Assistant Chief, two Captains, and two EMTs as officers) would apply to both working firefighters and retired ones. Currently, there are 15 members of the fire department. "Other towns are losing firefighters because they are not taking care of them," said Tryon.

George Emmons of the Finance Committee and the Salary Committee, Mike Storch, and Deb Mielke of the Salary Committee and Stan Ross and Dan Moriarty from the Finance Committee joined the Select Board to hear the proposal. The feeling is that this new approach would cost somewhat more than the old tax abatement system, but people were generally sympathetic. Numbers will have to be crunched, legal language explored, and the proposal finalized before it can come before the voters at town meeting this spring.

It was noted that Tryon is serving his fiftieth year as a volunteer firefighter in the Monterey department, following in his father Wallace's footsteps, and that his son, Leigh, is also an officer in the department, carrying on the family tradition.

## The Boat Ramp

Rod Palmer informed the Select Board that he no longer thought the Peppermint Brook site proposal for a new boat ramp on Lake Garfield had much merit. There has been, he thought, so much negative response—and the site is wet anyway—that the town might as well not pursue it. Select Board member Peter Brown reminded Palmer that the town will not use "taking by eminent domain" if it can help it because it is an adverse proceeding, and that it was not the town's responsibility to solve the boat ramp problem but the state's. "We will work with the state to find a reasonable site," said Brown, but in spite of an invitation to come and view sites, the state has yet to respond.

## Policing the Town

Good news! Chief of Police Gareth Backhaus reported that Monterey has been awarded a Community Policing Grant that will provide the town's portion of matching funds for salary support of a second officer. The grant is for $12,000 and matches the grant from the Department of Justice. A new police officer, Kyle Whalley, has been hired to replace Roger Arduini. Whalley holds an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice from Holyoke Community College and was born in Holyoke. A 23-year resident of Southwick, he served on the force there and worked to complete the police academy training. He is 27 years old and describes himself as "single but attached." Welcome to Monterey, Kyle.

Perhaps related to the above, there has been an increase in citations and

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warnings issued to speeders traveling on Route 23 through Monterey. Many of them, according to Chief Backhaus, appear to be skiers in a hurry to hit the slopes. Chief Backhaus is also thinking about a replacement for the cruiser: not a four-wheel-drive vehicle, he said, as it means too much in both initial and gasoline costs, but another sedan. He also credits the Highway Department's excellent upkeep of the roads in the winter as part of the reason the department will not, he thinks, need four-wheel drive.

Chief Backhaus made a point of saying that the department is doing regular patrols and checking houses on back roads as they drive by. Otis has had a rash of breaking and entering and burglaries—21 in recent months—but Monterey's rate has been slowly dropping, perhaps due to greater visibility and watchful eyes. Backhaus recommends the hiring of a local caretaker to check on things if householders are away for the winter, and a call to the Police Department if a house will be vacant for a short vacation. "An extra pair of eyes, particularly someone who knows the local cars, etc., is a good idea," said Backhaus, who also said that an occasional dusting of snow can be an absentee homeowner's friend.

## Scenic Mountain Act

The Conservation Commission has been meeting regularly to try to hammer out language for local regulations by which Monterey might implement the Scenic Mountain Act, which was overwhelmingly supported by town vote last May. There has been a great deal of discussion about the map and the boundaries described in the text that is proposed, and a citizen's draft was given to the Select Board and the Conservation Commission by former Select Board member Muriel Lazzarini, engineer Robert Hoogs, and local resident Janet Cathcart. The citizen's group had discussed much of the material with the Conservation Commission as work went on in both groups, and in bringing their thinking to the Select Board a fruitful and passionate discussion of their respective points of view resulted and moved the issues forward a notch.

There are, essentially, at least two schools of thought: (1) restrict the regulatory language to sites above X (now likely 1500) feet and deal with steep slopes in some other way (perhaps through zoning bylaws, although their rigidity seems problematic), or, (2) considering that all of Monterey is essentially highlands, (a) apply the act across the board to everything above a certain elevation, and (b) scrap the attempt to delineate which specific areas below that elevation are included due to their slope and apply the act across the board at lower elevations as well, but with different regulations that attend to issues of drainage, erosion, watershed, etc., with applicability for each case being discussed on a case-by-case basis as part of the general permitting process. Two areas would thus be created: areas covered by the act by virtue of

*(over >)*

Michael Storch

*Revelers at Coffee Club New Year's Breakfast: (l-r) Barbara & Jules Dahlman, Marion & Len Simon, Lois Storch (seated center), Michael & Sharon Feltser*


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their location above a certain elevation (to preserve ridgelines), and areas below that elevation which may be considered as falling under regulation due to the slope of the land and thus their potential for affecting the watershed drainage. That would, in effect, have the act cover the entire town equally, with the Conservation Commission empowered to consider issues of slope (and the potential effect on watershed, drainage, erosion, etc., of disturbing the ground there) on lower elevations, just as they already consider wetlands, etc., in determining suitability of a particular piece of land for a project. They would then work with the project proposer to mitigate impact.

In both cases, there is no question that this act is not about competing scenic values (is a pasture less scenic than a forest?) and is not about prohibition of projects, but it is about mitigation of the ruinous effects of haphazardly and thoughtlessly developing areas that drain into streams, ponds, and lakes. The Commission heard earlier comments about agricultural use, and the state definition is now included in the proposed regulations as an exempt activity. That should not, as was pointed out by some, be applied solely to commercial agriculture, but would also exempt those who raise or keep animals or grow garden crops, etc., for their own use.

Both sides complimented Chris Blair and his group for their hard work and continuing dedication to getting this right. In any case, we have not heard the last word on the matter, and further refinements will doubtless be forthcoming. Language will be clarified, simplified, made unambiguous and easy to follow. Neither the Commission, the citizenry, nor the Select Board is going to settle for something that isn't the absolutely best the town can do on this important matter. Stay tuned!

## Community Development Plan

Brian Boeskin, our consultant from the Regional Planning Commission, Laurie Sanders of the U. Mass. Extension, and Sarah Hudson of the Tyringham Planning Board met with the Select Board to talk about the final products coming out of 18 months of creating a community development plan and an open space plan (along with the continuing work on updating the zoning bylaws for Monterey that Joel Russell is working on). The Regional Planning Commission worked on a housing, economic development, and transportation plan, and Brian presented draft findings. The reports ultimately will not only enable Monterey to take sensible, organized, and thoughtful steps as it moves toward the future—in infrastructure planning, balancing preservation and growth, and resistance to large-scale commercial development—but will also allow the town to apply for grant monies to implement some desired projects. Additionally, the town can consider what steps it need to take to protect itself against unwanted action, such as a developer coming in to build affordable housing willy-nilly and regardless of local zoning requirements (under the dreaded 40B, or Comprehensive Permit Law, which requires that the town be working toward having a certain percentage of the town's housing stock designated as affordable or risk such unregulated development).

Michael Storch

*Mary Ward at New Year's Breakfast*

January saw the Jeffersonian model in action: many citizens doing yeoman service, making their way into committee meetings and hearings, writing letters, bringing issues and reports to the Select Board, doing research and drafting proposals, and generally participating in their own governance. Maybe next month will see them coming in to the newly revamped town offices! There's a plan somewhere calling for that . . . Happy Valentine's Day!

— K. Wasiuk


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## Another Approach to Scenic Mountain Act

Concern about the scope of the regulations and map of coverage for Monterey under the Scenic Mountain Act proposed by the Conversation Commission has led a group of citizens to draft alternative text to clarify several sections of the bylaw. The alternative draft was discussed with the Select Board and Conservation Commission on January 26. All the revisions and recommendations of this citizen draft were predicated on limiting the coverage of the Act in Monterey to only those areas above the 1500-foot elevation, and deleting or deferring the "steep slope" areas (15% or greater) below 1500 feet.

At the meeting, it was suggested that another alternative would be to simplify the map by including all steep slope areas below elevation 1500 feet This would eliminate the current "checkerboarding" of the map and would make the application of the scenic mountain regulations apply uniformly and fairly to all steep slopes. A separate set of regulations specific to the issues related to building or changes on steep slopes below 1500 feet would be considered to apply to those areas.

Further comments from others in the community are sought and welcomed as further drafting and discussions continue. If anyone in Monterey wants to receive a copy of the document comparing the two drafts currently being discussed, or to receive email notification of further meetings, or to send in their own suggestions and comments please send an email to one of the following individuals telling us what you would like to receive or submit:

Rob Hoogs at rhoogs@foresightland.com
Muriel Lazzarini at malazz@map.com
Janet Cathcart at cathcart@labridge.com

## Pathways to Peace Topic for Feb. Community Dinner

Michael Johnson, United Nations Representative for the organization Pathways to Peace and a member of the United Nations Spiritual Caucus, will be the speaker for the February Community Dinner on the 11th. Michael is a Monterey resident who is well known as an advocate for peace, inspiring people to take effective peaceful actions on a variety of social, spiritual, and environmental issues through his writing, personal coaching, public speaking, and organized community events. He will speak about his work, including the United Nations International Day of Peace. Thank you, Michael, for stepping into the schedule at the last minute.

Cold weather did not hinder the crowd that enjoyed MaryKate Jordan's discussion of Edith Wharton at the January meeting. Drawing upon her knowledge of Wharton's biography and published fiction, MaryKate took us back to a time in the Berkshires when towns such as Monterey were considered remote, but rich material for a writer's imagination. We are grateful to MaryKate for inspiring more than one person to express their intention to reread *Ethan Frome* and *Summer,* and for her fascinating insight into a great writer.

Don't miss the next dinner, February 11 from 6:00–8:00 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. As always, everyone is welcome. We ask that you bring a generous dish to share plus a serving utensil and place settings for yourself. The church phone number—528-5850—will have a recorded message in case of cancellation or postponement due to bad weather.

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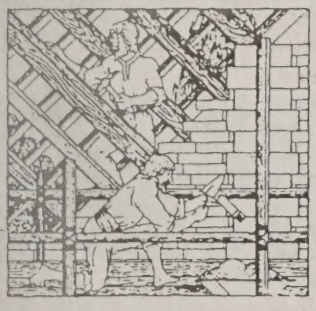

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## Brush Burning Permits, Regulations, Guidelines

Each year, the state allows some Massachusetts towns, including Monterey, to conduct open burning. It is important to remember that when burning, you are subject to certain requirements and responsibilities issued and enforced by the State Fire Marshal's Office, DEP, and your local Fire Department. These guidelines include the following:

- Permits can be obtained from January 15 to April 30.
- You must obtain a permit for open burning from your local Fire Department by calling 528-1734.
- Residents must call the Fire Department on the day they will be burning; no permits are issued ahead of time. The permit is good for one day only
- Burning hours start at 10 a.m. and all fires must be out by 4 p.m.
- Burning materials will be confined to brush only. All other materials are prohibited
- Burning piles will be kept small and controllable.
- Have a method of extinguishment available.
- Never leave the fire unattended for any reason.
- Permits are issued weather permitting. Burning is not allowed every day.
- Don't wait until the end of April; you will be disappointed if you wait until the last minute.
- The "burning season" will not be extended.

Make sure you call for a permit at 528-1734 and leave your name, the address where you are burning, and a phone number.

### MONTEREY LIBRARY

Monday ..... 7–9 p.m.
Tuesday ..... 9:30 a.m.–noon
Wednesday ..... 3–5 p.m.
Saturday ..... 9:30 a.m.–noon
..... 7–9 p.m.

Phone 528-3795

## Republican Caucus

The Republican Committee will be meeting on February 4th at 4:30 p.m. to entertain nominations for the ballot at the annual town meeting/election in May. Anyone wishing to run for an office should send a letter stating that interest to the Republican Committee in care of Mark Makuc, P.O. Box 711, Monterey, MA 01245.

The offices up for election are as follows:

Board of Appeals, one seat (5-year term)
Board of Assessors, one seat (1 year); one seat (2 years); one seat (3 years)
Board of Health, one seat (3 years)
Cemetery Committee, one seat (3 years)
Constable (3 years)
Finance Committee, one seat (3 years)
Library Trustees, two seats (3 years each)
Moderator (1 year)
Park Commission, one seat (2 years); two seats (3 years each)
Planning Board, one seat (2 years); one seat (5 years)
Select Board, one seat (3 years)
Tax Collector (3 years)
Town Treasurer (3 years)
Tree Warden (1 year)

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## Daffodil Days Are Here to Brighten up Your Day

Buy Daffodils and support the Cancer Drive.

Orders will be taken up to Feb. 27th. The daffodils are $7.00 a bunch for 12 blooms, paid in advance. The delivery date is Tuesday, March 23, at the Monterey Store.

Please call any of the following to order—or you may be getting a call from them: Michèle Miller 528-3454; Ann Dinan 528-0611; Stephanie Grotz 528-4519; Denise Andrus 528-1723; Ruth Champigny 528-2855; Leona Chamberlin 528-0148; Maureen Hough 528-0782; Fran Amidon 528-1233. You can also order at the General Store.

Thank you for your past support, Monterey always outdoes other southern Berkshire areas. The buds open to a large beautiful flower and last a long time to cheer you 'til spring. For more info call Fran Amidon 528-1233

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# Berkshire Hatchery to Conduct Salmon Feed Experiment

George Emmons

*Hatchery staff and volunteers preparing to stock trout in Lower Spectacle Pond*

The Berkshire Hatchery has already been certified by the state to propagate its fish; i.e., has a license to stock trout in local ponds. With this good news, priority one several weeks ago was to put some twenty three- and four-pound rainbows in Lower Spectacle Pond (off Route 23 in Otis, just across the Monterey line), in preparation for the Izaak Walton ice fishing derby that takes place on Sunday, February 1. More good news also soon materialized, when it was learned that the Hatchery is to receive some 200 salmon from U.S. Fish and Wildlife for a study to be conducted by The Western Center for Sustainable Aquaculture.

Recent national news coverage press releases indicate that domestically raised salmon have been shown in tests to contain ten times as many PCBs and other health-threatening chemicals as salmon caught in the wild. So the 200 salmon received here will be tested upon their arrival by Keith Wilda, Executive Director, and then put on a new diet developed by Cabbage Hill Farm in Mt. Kisko, New York., a collaborator of Hatchery programs, that is being called freedom fish food. Essentially it is produced from plant material, rather than ground-up fish, and if, after being on the feed for a period of time, the salmon get a cleaner bill of health, it could be significant.

The Hatchery will soon be set up with a new Web Site for the first time, thanks to Pam Johnson, whose expertise is locally well known for the sites she made for The Bidwell House, the Berkshire Botanical Gardens, and Shakespeare & Co., to name a few. Members of The Berkshire Hatchery Foundation Board of Directors are also working with Robert Oakes, husband of The Bidwell House Resident Director, and a talented graphic designer, to produce a new hatchery brochure. Things are coming together, thanks to the support of the people of Monterey, who make the place and make it work. Many thanks!

— George Emmons


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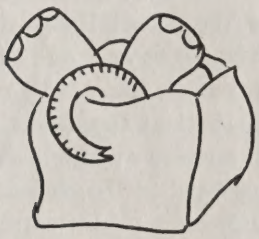
## Selection of New Arrivals at Monterey Library

**Adult Fiction**
*Absolute Friends,* John Le Carré
*The Sight of the Stars,* Belva Plain
*Winter in Kandahar,* Steven Wilson

**Children/Young Adults**
*Night Science for Kids,* Terry Krautwurst

**Adult Nonfiction**
*Hawks and Owls of Eastern North America,* Donald Heintzelman
*Slave: My True Story,* Mende Nazer
*The Last Samurai: The Life and Battles of Saigo Takamori,* Mark Ravina
*The Healing Garden,* David Squire
*Hiding the Elephant: How Magicians Invented the Impossible and Learned to Disappear,* Jim Steinmeyer



Michael Storch

*Stan Ross, George Emmons, and Dean Amidon at New Year's Breakfast*

## Green Corner: Recycle, Recycle, Recycle

Yearly, Americans throw away enough paper to make a 12-foot wall from New York to California. Yet recycling one ton of paper conserves 20 trees, 4100 kilowatt hours of energy, 384 gallons of oil, and 660 pounds of polluting air emissions. The cumulative weight of residential recyclables is significant. In turn, so are the environmental and economic benefits. Sorting recycled materials sustains ten times more jobs per ton than landfilling.

Here are some of the items that can be recycled in Monterey:

- Newspaper and inserts
- Junk mail
- Cereal, shoe, cracker boxes, etc. Remove liners
- Magazines and catalogs
- Paper bags
- White and colored office paper
- Computer paper
- Corrugated cardboard. Flatten, remove tape and string.
- Paperbacks and phone books. Remove covers.

IN A SEPARATE CONTAINER (rinsed):

- Clear, green or brown glass bottles and glass jars.
- Aluminum, tin, steel cans. Lids and aluminum foil.
- Milk and juice cartons (tent top), drink boxes.
- Plastic bottles, jars, tubs. No lids

To learn how to reduce the amount of junk mail you receive and find out about other reuse and waste prevention ideas, call CET at 1-800-238-1221 and ask for Jamie or Amy.

— James Cahillane, CET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## The Solid Waste Committee Wants You!

The Monterey Solid Waste Committee is looking for new members. Our committee has been in existence since around 1985, I think, and we would like to introduce ourselves and the Committee to members of the town who are interested in "saving the world," or at least our little corner of it.

Our job, among other things, is to keep track of costs to the town for waste disposal, recycling, dump stickers, transfer station updating, etc.

And, most importantly, to keep the town abreast of the constantly changing new programs, state requirements, hazardous waste days, better ideas of how to improve our recycling rate (for which we receive cash back) to keep the municipal waste stream environmentally safe and *minimal*. New methods and technology to improve our efforts are constantly emerging and it really is important to keep informed of it all.

We work closely with the Center for Environmental Technology (CET), which works with four other towns as well as ours. This group meets monthly—and goes under the mouthful of "The Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Committee."

We would be especially pleased to have some of our new citizens of the town join our committee. A couple of people have said to me that they want to get involved with town affairs. What better way than to jump into—well—garbage to get a jump start on it all.

We meet the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Bonnie Jurgenson, our ever helpful Town Assistant, said she would answer any questions people might have, if you are unable to attend the meeting. The Town Hall number is: 528-1443.

Hoping to see you there,

— Joyce Scheffey
Monterey Solid Waste Committee

## Monterey Skating Rink Hours, Winter 2004

The Monterey Park Commission has set the following hours, weather permitting, for the ice skating rink at the Firehouse Pavilion. Skating rink hours are dawn to 9 p.m.

**Monday–Friday**

**Dawn till 3:00 p.m.:** Public Skating
**3:00 to 5:00 p.m.:** Kids/Family Hockey Time
**5:00 to 7:00 p.m.:** Public Skating (may be closed for ice-making at this time also; skaters may be asked to leave the ice)
**7:00 p.m. on:** Hockey, except for Public Skating on Wednesdays

**Saturday**

**9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.:** Southern Berkshire YMCA Skating Lessons until 2/9/03. Kids/Family Hockey Time (after 2/9/03).
**Noon to 3:00 p.m.:** Public Skating
**3:00 to 5:00 p.m.:** Kids/Family Hockey
**5:00 to 7:00 p.m.:** CLOSED
**7:00 to 9:00 p.m.:** Saturday Night Public Skating Party

**Sunday**

**9 a.m. to noon:** Pickup Hockey
**Noon to 3:00 p.m.:** Public Skating
**3:00 to 5:00 p.m.:** Kids/Family Hockey
**After 5 p.m.:** CLOSED for major ice-making to repair from weekend use

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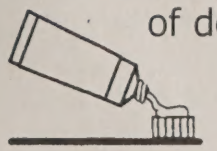

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## The Scholar

*He gets up, shuts the windows*
*because it is raining, weeping the dust away*
*he shaves and cuts himself*
*burns the coffee, breaks a shoelace*
*finds a button off his shirt*

*the newspaper screams corruption*
*loneliness clings to the walls*
*he gathers up his books, goes out*
*slamming the door*

*at the bus stop on the corner*
*people under their umbrellas*
*marvel at his face, drenched*
*him in his raincoat, collar turned up*
*rough curls under a crown of drops*
*his smile a conquest, deep, bemused*
*with secret joy*
*for he has seen cream-colored Aphrodite*
*rising from the sea-green froth:*
*he is still the Apollo of his dreams.*

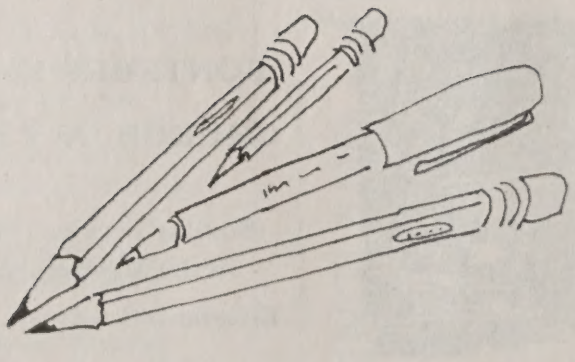
— A. O. Howell

## Ferry Babies (for Michele)

*we ferry a blue sky on pink clouds*
*sun sailing low, west of the Hudson*
*Lady Liberty flirting rosey*
*the proud Giants of America*
*on shore before us, all lined up tight*
*on Manhattan Island's first yard line*
*with no opponents in sight or flight —*
*"niente male! — not bad!" we say*
*(IF — we want to stay as blind as them)*

*whatever baby you're carrying*
*through the frightful and glittering dark*
*you want it to stay well protected*
*into the dawn of the bright new year*
*protected:*
*from false gods, fake tits, and false alarms*
*from hollow root and hallowed rats*
*from plastic wrap and housing projects*
*from imperial sprawl and*
*democratic occupations*
*from virtual sunrise and*
*spring at the punch of a button*
*from music mulched by money*
*swingless, dreamless*
*from life in the stall*
*sunless, moonless*
*from overzealous waiters pouring*
*New Years on top of Christmas*
*from big reds without dregs*
*not drunk to the last drop*

— R. Zukowski



## The Gilded Age: Train from Station B.

*Although every meeting ends*
*in parting,*
*night is no less dignified*
*than day . . .*

*A train idles at the station,*
*you consider throwing your body, limp*
*across the track.*

*When is it too late, to dive*
*into an abyss where the unsaid*
*no longer*
*echoes in the chasms of your skull?*

*Recall how he tipped his cap*
*and touched the window,*
*fingerprints you would try again*
*and again*
*to revisit,*

*If only the wars had not come*
*silence may have broken,*
*and spilled through*
*the whistle's cackling omen.*

*Some procrastinate to a fault,*
*leave the ring in a box*
*and live exiled from sunshine.*

*Others leap into a crowd,*
*casting their dreams*
*like diamonds for the crows.*

*And he, in last attempt for*
*a casual adieu-*
*pressed a hand to the glass,*
*keeping the wind from his hair*
*and words tucked safely in his mouth.*

*When the train returned, empty,*
*the only sound —*
*a shovel breaking*
*and the whistle's*
*fading wail*

— M. Hamilton

## Sweet Valentine

*During this month,*
*it strikes me quite strange*
*that we send out our hearts,*
*not a kidney or parts.*

*Why? I must know —*
*couldn't we send a nice toe,*
*or perhaps a pulled tooth*
*(I 'spose this wouldn't be couth)*
*maybe some hair*
*(to show that we care)*
*Or a nose and an eye*
*(if we're just a bit shy!)*

*But instead we mail hearts,*
*bloody and blue . . .*
*to express our love*
*and reveal that it's true.*

*I'm not one to break from the norm,*
*so I'll send out my heart*
*still beating and warm.*

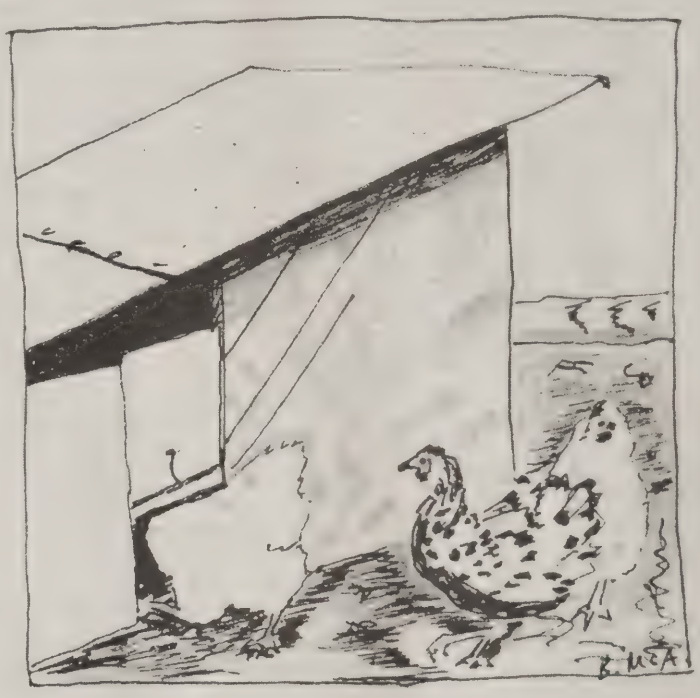
— M. Hamilton

# The Chilly Chickens of Yesteryear

Monterey has been cold lately. In the Post Office it's what we say to each other: Cold out. Cold enough for ya? Can't go on forever . . . How's your woodpile? We been spoiled the last few years, I guess. How's your pipes?

In our house we are lucky to have wood heat, no backup. This means a maximum priority relationship with the woodpile and the stove. We keep up with these things if nothing else, and by golly we are warm. Our system is working as I write, but it has not always been so. We remember the year we moved into the house, 1979, with the roof just on in December and the chinking not tight and the window glass only put in from the inside. On our steep hillside, in ice and snow, we could not take big pieces of plate glass up a ladder to put the outer panes on our homemade thermopane windows. So that was a cold winter, indoors. Outdoors the temperature dropped to -25 the day we moved in and stayed there for two weeks.

We put the couch about three feet from the Ashley and never ventured away from it unless we could be active. Feeling a little chilly? Get up and sweep the floor. I was working on carved wooden spoons for Christmas presents. I could sit on the shaving horse and focus on my projects with just enough elbow grease and caloric combustion to keep myself comfortable during those bitter days. We went to bed early, we did not remove the long johns, we unzipped our sleeping bags and stacked them on top of our blankets.



In our early years here we had a few chickens whose lifestyle, like ours, was more subsistence level and close to the wild than that of some folks or some folks' chickens. They had a little doghouse dwelling, made of lumber from the dump. By day they sallied forth and made for the sheltered sunny places, chiefly along our driveway. At night we latched up their little door after they had gone to bed. We knew they were safe from predators but as we warmed up under our sleeping bags we pitied the chickens in their bitter doghouse, with bare combs and legs. We used to heat up some good-sized rocks on our Ashley which we would carry out to the chickens. We tucked the rocks in through the door, wrapped in rags so they wouldn't blister their feet. Who knows if it made any difference to the chickens? By morning the rocks were frozen to the ground and had to be knocked loose and brought back in to start warming up for the next night.

We don't heat rocks for the hens any more. We built them a good snug house, with proper lumber and a warm water fountain. Maybe they are suffering out there, but I don't think so. I check them late in the day and they are roosting in their usual places. For Emerald, the oldest, this is often inside the nestbox with her feet in the hay and her feathers fluffed up. She is twelve years old and one of these days I expect she will turn up her toes and leave her chilly body behind as she heads for that sunny dust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bath where all chickens go when their time comes up.

A chicken in a dust bath seems like a picture of pure pleasure: she scratches and squirms, rolling this way and that to get the loose dirt or debris all through her feathers. The experience appears to contain elements of a good back rub, a hot bath, and some yoga all mixed together. But really, who knows what a chicken goes through? Whether it is a subzero night or a patch of loose dirt in the sun, all we can really say is, "If it were me out there, I'd be suffering," or "I'd be my happiest self."

I do not mean to imply that chickens don't feel pain. I just think, as we go through this chilly time, we can take some advantage of our sentient burden and think of Emerald, the ancient hen with her bare legs and comb. She does not know if she'll ever kick warm sand through her feathers again or if her comb will thaw out. Her life is an endless now. She chuckles when we put her grain in the hopper and makes a little trilling noise at night when I peek into the nestbox to see if she is still with us. I think it is a sweet noise, but I don't think she thinks this. She just does what she does. If you saw her in the Post Office you could say: Cold enough for ya? Emerald would look at you and utter some seasonal chicken wisdom: Buck, buck, buck. (She has a soft voice.)

— Bonner J. McAllester

## Ben Luxon to Present WWI Poetry Program at New Boston Inn

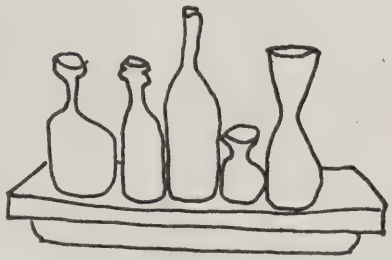
On Sunday, February 15, at 6 p.m., Ben Luxon will present "Poetry, Poets and the First World War" at the New Boston Inn in Sandisfield. Tickets are $25 per person including supper, dessert, and coffee at the start of the evening. Proceeds from the event will go to the Sandisfield Arts Center.

The program will trace the effect on the soldier-poets who experienced the horrors of World War I. This war was billed as "the war to end all wars," but it heralded the most violent century in the history of the human race, killing 10 million men and maiming and wounding 20 million others.

Luxon, the world-renowned British baritone, will read the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, and Robert Graves, among others. They describe bitterly, graphically, and movingly the experience of the cruel authority, slaughter, mud, cold, gas, rats, lice, and the incomprehension of civilians at home. They came to understand the real cost of war and the vanity of that cost. Sadly, as history has unfolded, their message is still relevant and powerful.

Luxon, who lives in Sandisfield with his wife, Susie Crofut, has been recording speaking roles instead of singing roles since becoming partially deaf in the 1990s. His latest recording of "Enoch Arden," a melodrama for speaker and piano composed by Richard Strauss around the poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson, was released in April 2003 by JRI Recordings.

The New Boston Inn is located at the junction of Routes 8 and 57 in Sandisfield. To reserve a ticket for this special event or to get more information, please call 413-258-4994.

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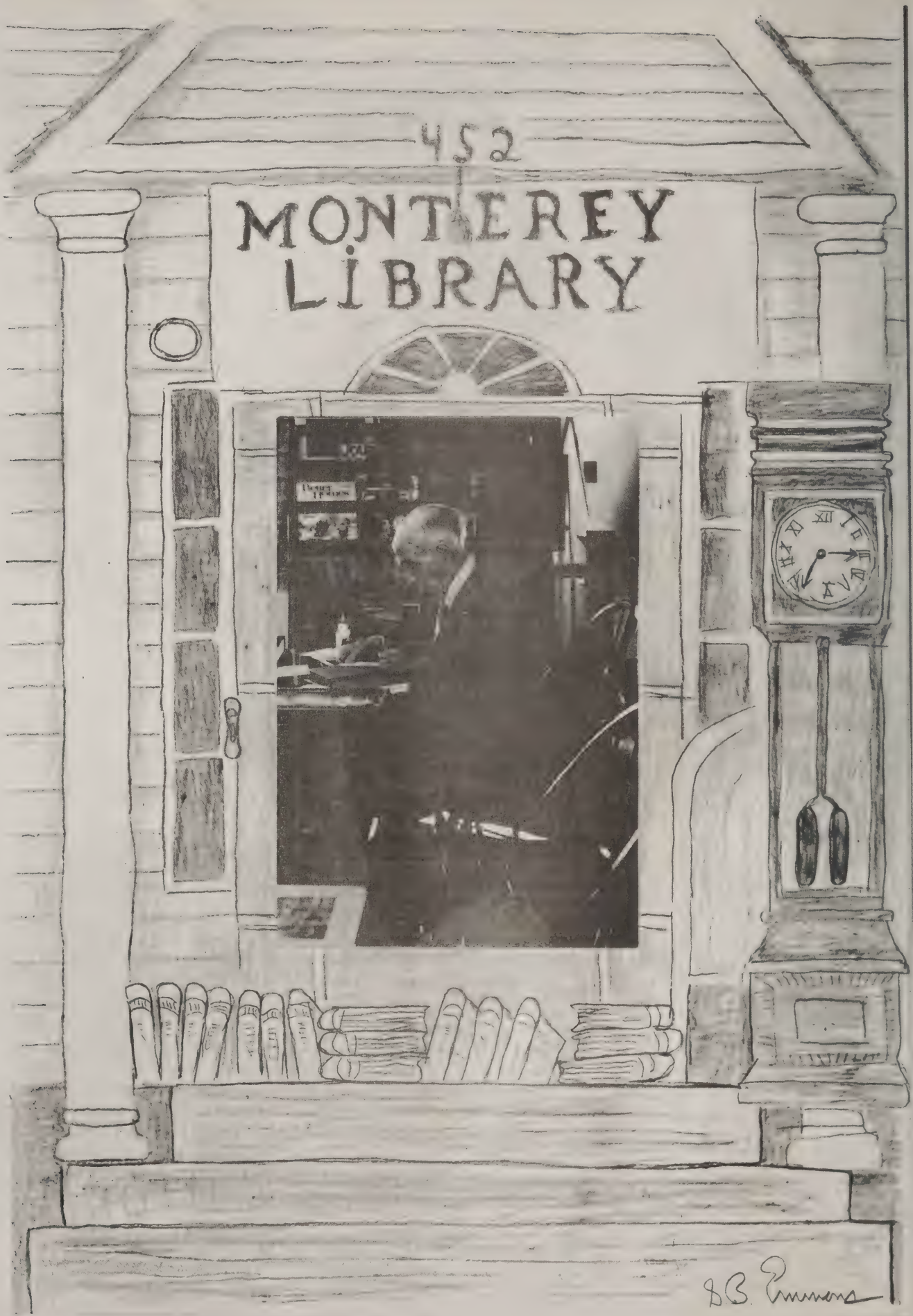
452
MONTEREY
LIBRARY

## Who Was Newman B. Abercrombie?

Newman Abercrombie was Monterey's Librarian for 54 years, from 1924 until he retired in 1978, at the age of 86. He was the son of a Congregational minister from Cape Cod who moved from parish to parish every seven or eight years, a rotation in location that brought him here to the church in Monterey. By the time Newman graduated from Williams College, not far away, his father had moved on, but after a short time teaching language in the Cape Cod public school system Newman came back here to live with his sister Grace Miner. Grace's husband, Julius, was proprietor of the General Store, and they all lived in the white New England–style farmhouse and attached red barn that is still a Monterey landmark. It is on the left-hand side of Main Road, about half way up the hill toward the firehouse, and has more recently been restored to mint condition by Stan and Edie Ross.

If 1931 was not too good of a year for the country—Herbert Hoover had only completed half a term as president, and the stock market had already crashed once—good things happened for the library. It was blessed with a gift of $3,000 for a new building from Mrs. Frank Conley, who was also Alice Tryon, great-aunt of both Ray and Dick Tryon. An additional $7,000 was raised by the town, which has a long history of supporting the library from that time to this, and construction of the present building came about. Of course Newman came with it, as well as a splendid grandfather clock, another gift of Mrs. Conley. The clock, which came from the Conley Inn, now the Yankee Pedlar Inn, in Torrington, Connecticut, has a distinctive pendulum that measures the heartbeat of the mechanism; they don't make them that way anymore. It still stands against the wall, between the computer and a bookcase, symbolizing a span of three-quarters of a century, from the formative years to the modern age of the internet. As it ticked away the seconds, minutes, and hours of the better part of Newman's tenure, it was a simultaneous calibration of his dedication. The venerable old face with roman numerals somehow seems to reflect an aura of his influence and dignity.

Many old-timers here still remember Newman walking down the hill from the Miner's house past the Post Office, where stood the previous library. It was so close to the Konkapot flood plain that at one time its one-room-shack frame was chained to a telephone pole to insure it stayed in its proper location. Newman's niece, Frances Miner, now Frances Turner, remembers walking with him to the new building, and as a little girl sitting in the Windsor chairs, when her feet could not touch the floor, to look at pictures in *Popular Mechanics* and *National Geographic*. She remembers him as very helpful to visitors, although he could be grumpy as he got older. He spent hours at home cutting covers on books to be properly cataloged, and he was very meticulous with his literary treasure house, in an age when the written word had cornered a receptive audience here of leisurely hours and open minds.

As the ensuing years added up to almost five decades, Newman B. Abercrombie and small-town Main Road Monterey knew he had found his calling. He rejoiced in being able to greet and converse with everyone he met, and the thread of his life was interwoven like a shuttle passing back and forth between


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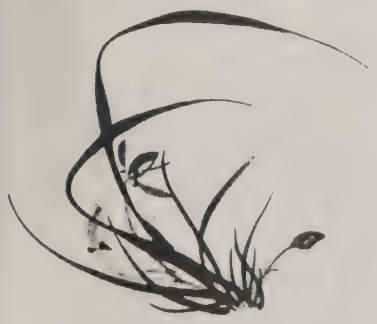

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the warp and filling of Grange, church, store, library, Tea House, Post Office, gas station, and garage. According to Ann Marie Makuc, who became librarian when Newman retired (it is remarkable that since the 1920s Monterey has had only two librarians!), many who knew him thought he was the glue that held the town together. He served on the town Finance Committee and, with a conservative mind-set as a child of the great depression, voted himself a fee of one dollar a week to buy coal and, as caretaker, keep the stove stoked up in the library. He was also an assessor when the board met upstairs on the second floor of the present Village School, and was president of the Monterey Water Company.

When reading books was in its heyday, the bookmobile of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System came here much more often, and Tom Mooney, who brought it here one day in 1951, remembers that Newman was in a snit about J. B. Salinger's new novel, *Catcher in the Rye*, which had too many cuss words for his liking. Another bookmobile worker, Barbara Morey, now retired in Richmond, Massachusetts, remembers him most for his great sense of humor. She recalls the morning that Mrs. Gates, a retired professional singer living at Brookbend, popped her head in the library door and called out to Newman, "How are you today, my little mosquito?" Newman retorted, "Give me a high note to start the day."

A prized and nostalgic possession of the Monterey Library is a guest book purchased by Ann Marie Makuc for $8.50, for Newman's friends to sign at his retirement ceremony, each writing their own personal sentiments, and I quote:

"Many thanks for all you gave to the town, and just plain thanks."

Edith Wilson

"Thank you for your thoughtfulness and interest in helping to find just the right books. Your keen memory never ceases to amaze me. Many best wishes . . . God bless you!"

Judy and Arnie Hayes

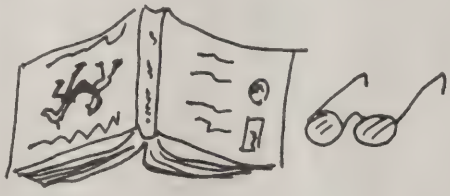
"I'll miss your well-chosen suggestions of what some of the better books are."

Mark Makuc

"To the man history will remember."

Sheldon Fenn

— George Emmons



## Highland Communities Initiative Events

**Working Farm Series**
**Tour of Tregelly's Fiber Farm**
**Feb. 7, 11 a.m., Hawley**

Come tour this unique farm, meet the variety of sheep, llamas, and camels, and learn about how this environmentally friendly farm has grown into a thriving niche business. Dress warmly. Please RSVP.

**Streamlining the Work of Conservation Commissions**
**Feb. 24, 7 p.m., Conway Town Hall**

This workshop with Conservation Planner Gloria McPherson will provide insight and advice to Conservation Commissions that wish to organize and streamline their review process, required forms, and local regulations. Free and open to all.

*For more information or to RSVP, contact Wendy Sweetser at 413-587-0716 x14 or wsweetser@ttor.org*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## Remembering William Lennox Stafford

William Lennox Stafford, who spent his childhood at Swann State Forest near Monterey, died January 7 in Santa Barbara, California. He was 88. His father, Earle Stafford, was Supervisor of Swann State Forest, now part of Beartown State Forest, from 1921 to 1941.

Bill attended Corashire School near Monterey, and graduated from Searles High School in Great Barrington in 1932. He then worked at various jobs for summer people around Monterey while also helping at Swann State Forest, planting many of the trees that still flourish today. After some time at the G.E. Pittsfield plant until orders diminished due to the Depression, he enlisted in the army in December, 1938. His three-year enlistment was due to end on a fateful day, December 7, 1941. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on that very date, Bill remained in the army through World War II and was honorably discharged in early 1946. He was proud that his military assignments and travels were so far-flung that his army career literally took him on a complete trip around the world.

After the war, having received a taste of sunny California at one of his military stations, he moved to the West Coast and spent virtually the rest of his life in Southern California. In December 1950 he married a Santa Barbara woman, Marianne Lester. They had two daughters, Jennifer and Barbara. He used the GI Bill to attend the University of California at Santa Barbara, graduating in June 1952.

Bill then spent years working for Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, and was one of a team assembling sections of DC-7s, DC-8s, DC-9s, and DC-10s. Upon his retirement, his great interest in earth sciences occupied him, and he had several articles on paleontological or fossil subjects published in magazines in the field.

On Christmas Day, 2000, he suffered a stroke which impaired him physically but left his mind and memory as sharp as ever. He spent his last three years at a Santa Barbara care center, with frequent visits from daughters, siblings, and friends until his quiet passing just after midnight on January 7.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, Earle and Edith, a brother, Arnold, and sister, Evalyn. He is survived by his wife, his two daughters, Jennifer Stafford of Santa Barbara, Barbara (Douglas) Killian of Amherst, New York, two grandchildren, a great-grandchild, and two brothers, Gordon and Shelton, both of Sierra Vista, Arizona. Jennifer and her mother Marianne were with him when he died. Private services were held.

## Remembering Gisela Freundlich

Mrs. Gisela (Omi) (Weens) Freundlich of Framingham died December 31, 2003, at St. Patrick's Manor in Framingham, Massachusetts.

She was the wife of the late Henry Freundlich, who predeceased her in 1976.

Born in Germany, she immigrated to New York City before moving to Framingham in 1980. Her happiest times were spent in her summer home in the Berkshires. She was a volunteer aide at the gift shop of the Framingham Union Hospital for over 20 years.

She leaves her daughter, Joyce Lebewohl and her husband Sidney of Framingham, and a son, Mike Freundlich and his wife Mickey of Sudbury; her grandchildren, Marc Freundlich of San Jose, California, Mitchell Freundlich and his wife Kristen of Framingham, Margey Vbrata and her husband Honza of Bend, Oregon, and the late Peter Sferra. She is also survived by two great-grandchildren. She was also predeceased by her brother, Dr. H. S. Weens who resided in Atlanta, Georgia.

A graveside service was held on Sunday, January 4, 2004, at the Framingham-Natick Jewish Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the charity of one's choice.

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### Thank You Highway Dept.!

To the Editor:

Webster printed a lot of adjectives, but none adequate to express how appreciative we are for the really great road maintenance in Monterey. At the moment we refer to the winter snow and ice maintenance, which is superb. This is important to all Monterey residents, but I speak especially for the five school bus drivers who have routes in parts of Monterey, twice a day, every day. THANK YOU! Child safety is very important to us and road conditions are a large and important factor. We compare conditions to other communities around us as well, and Monterey is the best! We know it requires a lot of decisions in road priorities and is at times difficult. Thanks too for those always friendly waves from the plowtruck drivers as we drive past. Many Thanks,

— Linda Thorpe; Alicia Brazie; Anita Cook; Tammi Palmer; Paul Dixon

## Calendar

**Every Monday (exc. holidays):** Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.–noon, Town Offices.

**Wednesday, February 4:** Republican Committee meeting, 4:30 p.m., Meetinghouse basement.

**Friday, February 6:** Full Moon

**Wednesday, February 11:** Community Dinner, 6 p.m., Fellowship Hall of Monterey Meetinghouse.

**Thursday, February 12:** Free blood pressure clinic, 2:30–3:30 p.m., Town Offices, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

**Monday, February 16:** Presidents Day. Town Offices closed.

**Saturday, February 28:**

Republican Committee meeting 1:00 p.m., Meetinghouse Basement, followed at 1:30 by the Republican Caucus.

Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Bill Olson. All dances are taught, beginners and children are welcome. Adults $6, children $3. Information 528-9385.

## Remembering Irving H. Halstead

Irving (Irv) H. Halstead, 84, of Venice, Florida, passed away on January 17, 2004. He and his family were summer residents of Monterey for over 37 years. He is survived by his wife, Louise; two daughters, Pamela Stevens of Lakewood, Colorado, and Wendy Hill of Sheffield, Massachusetts; and a son, Gary, of Pensacola, Florida. Also six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, two sisters and a brother.

No memorial services are planned. Donations may be made to a favorite charity.

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## Town of Monterey

### Regular Meeting Schedules of Town Boards

(Meetings are monthly and at Town Offices unless otherwise noted.)

**Appeals, Board of** (Peter Murkett, Chair) — As required

**Assessors, Board of** — To be announced

**Cemetery Committee** (Linda Thorpe, Chair) — Bimonthly (starting January), 1st Thursday, 7 p.m.

**Conservation Commission** (Chris Blair, Chair) — 2nd Monday, 6 p.m.

**Health, Board of** (Robert Lazzarini, Chair) — 1st & 3rd Thursdays, 7 p.m.

**Library Trustees** (Will Marsh, Chair) — 2nd Monday (exc. July, August, December), 7 p.m., Library

**Park Commission** (Leroy Thorpe, Chair) — 1st Monday, 9 a.m.

**Planning Board** (Gerry Shapiro, Chair) — 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7 p.m.

**School District Committee** (Rick Mielke, Monterey representative) — Alternate Thursdays, 7:30 p.m., Mt. Everett Reg. School, Sheffield

**Select Board** (Peter Brown, Chair) — Mondays (exc. legal holidays), 8:30 a.m.; evenings by appt.

### Regular Office Hours

(Town Offices telephone: 413-528-1443)

**Assessors' Clerk** (Patricia Amstead) — To be announced

**Tax Collector** (Henry Makuc; Asst., Mari Enoch) — Mondays, 7–9 p.m., home office (413-644-0299)

**Town Clerk** (Barbara Swann; Asst., Linda Thorpe) — Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Town Offices

**Town Offices** (Bonnie Jurgenson, Administrative Asst.) — Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

### Transfer Station Hours

| Summer (*Daylight Savings*) | Winter |
|---|---|
| Sunday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m. | Sunday: 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. |
| Wednesday: 8 a.m.–1 p.m. | Wednesday: 8 a.m.–1 p.m. |
| Saturday: 8 a.m.–1 p.m. | Saturday: 8 a.m.–1 p.m. |

### Library Hours

Monday: 7–9 p.m.
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m.–noon
Wednesday: 3–5 p.m.
Saturday: 9:30 a.m.–noon & 7–9 p.m.


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| | |
|---|---|
| High temp. (12/30) | 53° |
| Low temp. (1/15) | -15° |
| Avg. high temp. | 25.3° |
| Avg. low temp. | 9.3° |
| Avg. temp. | 17.3° |
| Total precipitation—occurred on 18 days (rain and melted snow) | 2.02" |
| Snowfall | 16.3" |
| Season total snowfall | 49.6" |
| (Last winter total to date | 75.5") |

## Contributors

We are grateful to the following readers for recent contributions.

Daniel Zweig & Sally Petrick
James & Carol Edelman
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Georgianna & Daniel Eschen
Gordon & Bette MacDonald
William & Joyce Pasco
Ellen Grenadier
Jeffrey Rubin & Leslie Naughton
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Our editorial address is *Monterey News*, P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs from readers. Please send submissions (e-mail or computer disk if possible) by the 20th of the month before publication, addressed to the Editor. Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail (free) to Barbara Tryon, Business Manager. We will typeset a text-only ad for your Monterey-based business, service, or event, or advertisers may submit a computer formatted ad with graphics. Address request for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or e-mail wilmarsh@localnet.com.

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*Contributions from local artists this month:*
*Pat Arnow, pp. 10, 13, 16, 17, 18; George Emmons, p. 14; Bonner McAllester, p. 12; Glynis Oliver, pp. 6, 8.*

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